

Presenter Biographies

Jill Duerr Berrick, MSW, Ph.D. is co-director of the Center for Child and Youth Policy and Professor in the School of Social Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley. She has served for the past two years as a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care, and previously served as a stakeholder in the California Re-Design Project. Berrick conducts research on various topics concerning child welfare with a special emphasis on enlisting the voices of children and families' lived experiences of the system. Dr. Berrick has authored or coauthored nine books on child abuse, foster care, and family poverty, and has written extensively for academic journals. Her upcoming title, *Take me home*, (Oxford University Press), examines evidence-based reforms that can improve the child welfare system.

Bill Bettencourt has 30 years of experience working in the social services field. He began his career as a Social Worker/Assistant Director for a parent-run community preschool. For over 26 years, he worked for the city and county of San Francisco, 5 years with the criminal justice system and 21 years with the child welfare system with the last 4 years as the director of child welfare. For 2 years, he was the Program Officer with the Stuart Foundation. Bill serves on boards and committees of numerous local, state and national organizations. He is currently a senior consultant for The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) and is the lead in California for their Family to Family child welfare reform initiative. Bill received his BA degree from SF State and his MA from the University of San Francisco.

Regina Deihl is the Executive Director of Legal Advocates for Permanent Parenting (LAPP), a non-profit organization providing information, training, consulting, and policy development for caregiver families and their child welfare partners. LAPP works to improve communication between caregiver families and social workers, service providers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), attorneys, and the courts. LAPP provides "plain language" materials and training on a range of foster care topics in California and throughout the country. LAPP's *Legal Toolkit Series for California Caregivers and Their Child Welfare Partners* was recently featured as an innovative project for increasing placement stability and permanency for children in foster care by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families in Washington, D.C. LAPP also participates in the child welfare legislative and regulatory policy arena and has sponsored six California bills since 2003, all signed into California law.

Ms. Deihl is also the co-author of a national level manual and curriculum on foster parent legal rights and responsibilities in collaboration with the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and the National Foster Parent Association. Prior to becoming Executive Director of LAPP, she worked as an attorney at the Center for Families, Children & the Courts at the Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts. As a member of the Judicial Review and Technical Assistance Team (JRTA), she advised juvenile court judges, child welfare agencies, and juvenile probation departments throughout California on compliance with the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). She was the project manager and co-author of the first major research study in the United States on participation by relative caregivers and foster parents in juvenile court proceedings under ASFA (*Caregivers and the Courts: Improving Court Decisions Affecting Children in Foster Care*). She graduated magna cum laude from Santa Clara University School of Law where she has served on the Public Interest Endowment Executive Board. She is a member of the National Association of Counsel for Children.

Hon. Leonard Edwards (Ret.) is a judge-in-residence with the Center for Families, Children & the Courts and has been employed by the AOC since June 2006. Judge Edwards is a retired judge from the Superior Court of Santa Clara County. In that capacity he served as supervising judge of the family court and presiding judge of the juvenile court. He most recently served as supervising judge of the juvenile dependency court. Judge Edwards has been active locally and nationally in juvenile and family law. He is the founder and past president of the Juvenile Court Judges of California and has served on the California Judicial Council. He is a past president of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He has taught juvenile and family law at the University of Santa Clara Law School, Stanford Law School, and at the California Judicial College. Judge Edwards has written widely in juvenile and family law. He and his wife have authored a book entitled Child Abuse and the Legal System. Judge Edwards has received many awards, both locally and nationally. He recently was named Jurist of the Year by the California Judicial Council and was given the 2004 William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence.

Catherine Huerta currently serves Fresno County as the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services. Cathi has been a Fresno County employee for 32 years with 25 years in a senior management capacity. In 1998, Cathi became Assistant Director over the Department of Children and Family Services. Cathi has a Masters of Social Work from California State University, Fresno.

Cathi is committed to the mission to lead and promote a system of best practice in partnership with the community, committee to prevention and early intervention, that ensures child safety, permanence stability, family well being, that is proactive, strategic, outcomes based and fiscally responsible to the children and families serviced. And is focused on ensuring all children have the opportunity to grow up in a safe, secure, stable and healthy environment. Cathi is the mother of five children and recently a grandchild was added to her family she is committed to family and has a strong belief in the family unit.

Frank J. Mecca, M.P.A. is currently the Executive Director of the County Welfare Directors Association of California. Frank has served as the Executive Director for the past 17 years, during which he has helped establish CWDA as a leading advocacy and policy organization in the field of public human services. Prior to joining CWDA in November of 1991, Frank served as a Fiscal and Policy Analyst for the Legislative Analyst's Office, where he had oversight responsibility for most child welfare programs, including Child Welfare Services, Foster Care and Adoptions. Frank holds a Masters Degree in Public Affairs with a concentration in Social Welfare Policy from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, Austin. Frank is a well respected expert in State and Federal Child Welfare Policy. Frank has his undergraduate degree in Government and Economics from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA.

Barbara Needell is a Research Specialist at the Center for Social Services Research at the University of California at Berkeley. As Principal Investigator of the California Child Welfare Performance Indicators Project (funded by the California Department of Social Services and the Stuart Foundation), she has worked extensively with statewide and county specific administrative data. Barbara and her team at UCB collaborate with state and county colleagues to produce and publicly disseminate (http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare) the data used in California's Child Welfare Service Outcomes System. She is currently providing technical assistance to the 25 California counties who are implementing the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family to Family

Initiative. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Mills College, with a B.A. with Honors in Psychology. She received her M.S.W. and Ph.D. with Distinction from the School of Social Welfare at Berkeley. In recent years, much of her work has centered on the issue of race/ethnic disparities in child welfare. She was a faculty member for the national Casey Family Program's Breakthrough Series on Racial Disproportionality, contributed to the GAO report on this topic, and is a member of both the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Eliminating Racial Disproportionality and Disparity Workgroup and the new American Public Human Services Association's Positioning Public Child Welfare Initiative Racial Disproportionality subcommittee. In addition to her California disparity-focused work, she is providing technical assistance to New York City's Administration of Children's Services (ACS). She just returned from the annual White Privilege Conference in Springfield, MA—so she is fired up and ready to go!

On July 1, 2007, **Sandra Shewry** assumed leadership of the newly established Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). With an extensive background as an innovator and leader of public health services, Ms. Shewry is well prepared to lead DHCS, which administers health programs serving nearly 7 million Californians. Managing expenditures of more than \$37 billion in public funds, DHCS oversees the state Medicaid program (Medi-Cal), the California Children's Services Program, the Child Health and Disability Prevention Program and the California Partnership for Long-Term Care. The mission of the 3,000-employee department is to preserve and improve the health of Californians.

Prior to her current role, Ms. Shewry was appointed Director of the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) in 2004 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. One of the largest departments within state government, CDHS (now defunct) managed a budget of \$39 billion and 6,000 employees. At CDHS, Ms. Shewry oversaw numerous programs targeted to public health, such as emergency preparedness and disease-prevention, the licensing of health facilities, and Medi-Cal.

Prior to joining CDHS, Ms. Shewry was Director of Health at the National Governor's Association's Center for Best Practices. She also served as Executive Director of the California Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board from 1996 to 2002 and was responsible for the development and implementation of California's high-risk health insurance pool (Major Risk Medical Insurance Plan), for a subsidized pregnancy coverage program (Access for Infants and Mothers), a small employer purchasing cooperative (Health Insurance Plan of California) and California's State Children's Health Insurance Program (Healthy Families).

Ms. Shewry has 25 years of experience in California state government, beginning her career as a health planning analyst with CDHS and later serving as an assistant secretary at the Health and Welfare Agency.

Ms. Shewry earned graduate degrees in public health and social welfare from the University of California at Berkeley.